

Claims

1. A method for transferring an ATM call, wherein a first ATM call is established between a first party and a second party and a second ATM call is established between the second party and a third party, wherein the first ATM call includes a plurality of segments that are coupled to a plurality of ATM
5 switches to provide a virtual connection, and wherein the second ATM call includes a plurality of segments that are coupled to a plurality of ATM switches to provide a virtual connection, the method comprising the steps of:
an ATM switch coupled to the second party receiving a message to transfer the first ATM call to the second ATM call to connect the first party and
10 the third party;
the ATM switch connecting a first segment of the first ATM call to a first segment of the second ATM call;
the ATM switch releasing a second segment of the first ATM call that extends from the ATM switch to the second party; and
15 the ATM switch releasing a second segment of the second ATM call that extends from the ATM switch to the second party.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the message includes a first identifier for the first ATM call and a second identifier for the second ATM call.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein the first identifier is a call reference for the first ATM call and the second identifier is a call reference for the second ATM call.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the second party is coupled to the ATM switch by a media access gateway and the media access gateway sends the message to the ATM switch.
5. The method of claim 4 wherein the media access gateway is coupled to a call control entity that receives a request from the second party to transfer the first ATM call to the second ATM call and wherein the media access

- gateway generates the message under control of the call control entity in
 5 response to the request from the second party.
6. The method of claim 5 wherein the media access gateway is one of a trunk access gateway or a line access gateway.
7. The method of claim 5 wherein the message is received by the ATM switch via the second segment of the first ATM call or via the second segment of the second ATM call.
8. The method of claim 5 wherein the media access gateway maintains control over a connection between the first segment of the first ATM call and the first segment of the second ATM call after the second segment of the first ATM call and the second segment of the second ATM call are released.
- 5 9. An apparatus for transferring an ATM call, comprising:
 an ATM switch that receives a message to transfer a first ATM call to a second ATM call;
 wherein the message is received over an ATM facility that couples the
 5 first ATM call or the second ATM call to the ATM switch;
 wherein in response to the message, the ATM switch connects a first segment of the first ATM call to a first segment of the second ATM call; and
 wherein the ATM switch releases a second segment of the first ATM call that extends from the ATM switch to a caller and releases a second
 10 segment of the second ATM call that extends from the ATM switch to the caller.
10. The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the message includes a first identifier for the first ATM call and a second identifier for the second ATM call.

11. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the first identifier is a call reference for the first ATM call and the second identifier is a call reference for the second ATM call.

12. The apparatus of claim 9 further comprising a media access gateway that is coupled to the caller and coupled to the ATM switch by the ATM facility, wherein the media access gateway transmits the message to the ATM switch.

13. The apparatus of claim 12 further comprising a call control entity coupled to the media access gateway that:

receives a request from the caller to transfer the first ATM call to the second ATM call; and

5 directs the media access gateway to transmit the message to the ATM switch.

14. An apparatus for transferring an ATM call, comprising:

a media access gateway that sends a message to an ATM switch over an ATM facility to transfer a first ATM call to a second ATM call; wherein in response to the message, the ATM switch:

5 connects a first segment of the first ATM call to a first segment of the second ATM call;

releases a second segment of the first ATM call that extends from the ATM switch to the media access gateway; and

10 releases a second segment of the second ATM call that extends from the ATM switch to the media access gateway.

15. The apparatus of claim 14 further comprising a call control entity coupled to the media access gateway to control the transmission of the message to the ATM switch by the media access gateway.